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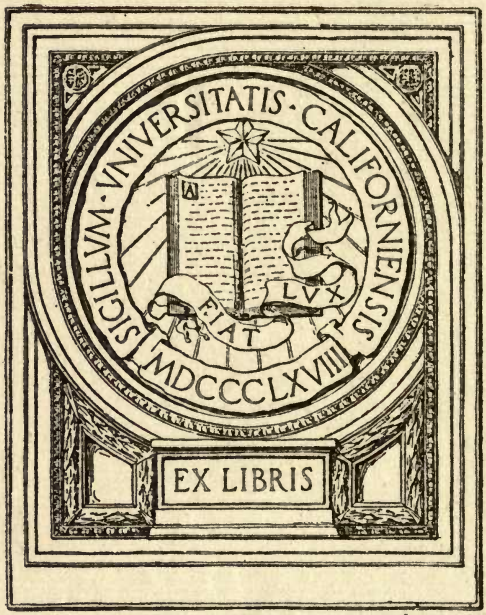
Where's Master?

BY

CÆSAR

The King's Dog



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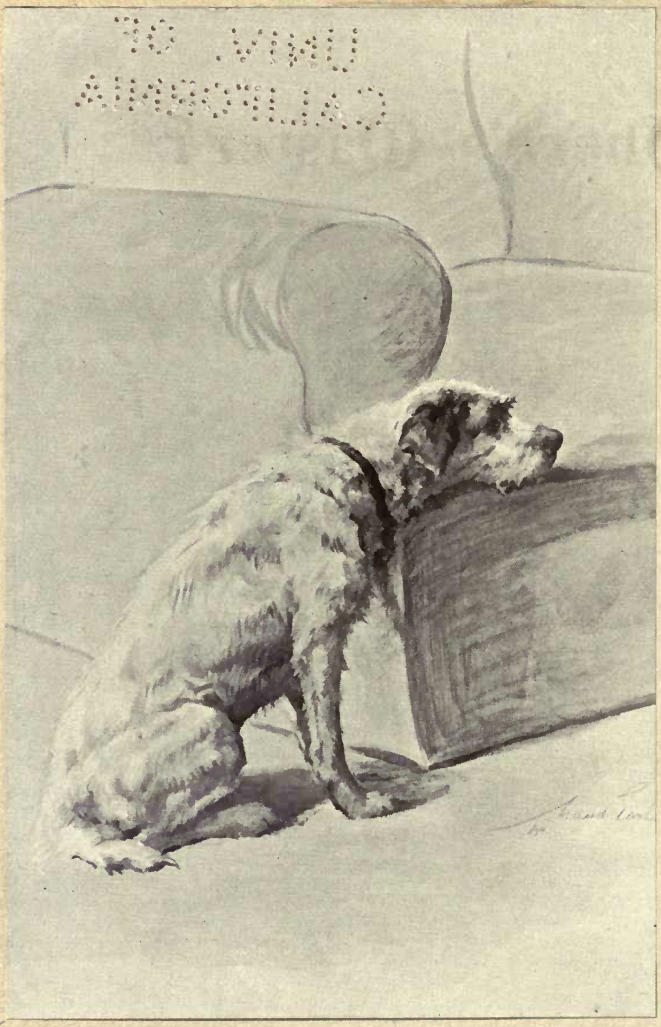
Where's Master?



CÆSAR

A Drawing by Maud Earl

From the Photogravure published by the Illustrated London News

Where's Master?

BY

CÆSAR

"I am Cæsar. I belong to the King."

(*Inscription on Cæsar's Collar*)

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To
Master's Queen—and mine;
To the beautiful Lady who found room
in her poor broken heart
for the sorrow of the
King's little dog
Cæsar.

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Where's Master? I've been hunting for him high and low for days. I can't find Master anywhere, and I'm so lonely. And I'm beginning to hate all these people who pat and pet me and offer me tit-bits to eat. I want Master—he knows just how to rub my hair up the wrong way, just how I like my ears twisted; I want to feel his warm hand catch hold of my

nose and waggle my head slowly to and fro. I wouldn't let anyone else do that, but he knows just how to find the little ticklish place under my chin. They have just brought me my dinner. They say She ordered it specially for me. I must say it smelt good, and I thought I'd try a mouthful to please Her. But it tasted bitter like medicine.

I want a bone from Master's plate. I never worry him when he's at table, but he knows I'm always there beside the right leg of his chair. And Master

never forgets his little dog, however many important people he may have to feed.

I've searched the Palace from top to bottom. At first it was rather fun, like the hide-and-seek game I used to play when I was a puppy. I pretended I knew all the time where he was, and that I was running up the stairs and along the corridors and into room after room just for the sport of it all. But I'm getting too old for that sort of thing. I've had a very jolly life, but I've had a lot to do and think about—

Master has been a bit of a care you know, and I've worried a good deal about him lately — and oh! I feel very tired and very sad and I want Master badly. Where *is* Master?

At first I thought he was still in the bedroom where I left him that Friday afternoon, and then I made sure he was in the Throne room, the great room with the slippery floor where I have to walk very carefully on the tips of my nails. But I must have been mistaken, for though I whined for quite a long time outside each door, and even gave just a short little bark, Master never

came. Sometimes he does keep me waiting a little just to tease me, but I've only to give a loud snuffle in the crack between the door and the floor, and the littlest scratch on the panel, and however busy he is he'll let me in. I'm awfully afraid I left my mark on the Throne room door, but I hope it won't be noticed, and, if it is, Master will put it all right, for he'll be very cross when he finds out they wouldn't let his little dog in. I know there was someone inside, for I heard voices just like those I've listened to while Master was in

church and I was outside waiting for him. I've always tried to be a specially good dog on Sunday, but Master says I've never been quite good enough to take inside church—though I've been almost everywhere else with him.

What a fine time we had at Sandringham only a Sunday or two ago. I thought Master seemed tired at breakfast, and I wanted him so much to take a rest that morning; so I snuggled up very close to him in his chair and pretended to snore. When he said, "This won't do, Cæsar, you know, it's Church time," I took no notice, but put my paws across his knees and my nose on my paws and

yawned. "I'm sorry, old man," Master said, "I'm tired too. I've done a bit too much lately, and there is still so much to be done. But I must go to Church, you know."

I didn't take any notice, and his voice was so low and weary that I thought if I kept very still and breathed very hard, as if I were fast asleep, he might rest too. For a minute or two he sat quite still. Then he jumped up and sent me flying, and said, quite sharply for him, "You know I never miss Church on Sunday."

And I did know, but I wish I could have kept him indoors that Sunday morning, for it was a cold, damp day and, somehow, I felt low and miserable and I wanted him to myself. But I knew, too, that, when he spoke like that, not even his little dog could stop him. He is always very kind, but he's always Master and no one ever thinks of disobeying him.

I saw him off at the door. I suppose I looked pretty down, for I remember he turned back and gave my ear a pull and promised he'd take me for a

real good walk in the afternoon.

And then I went to have a talk with Daisy, who lives at Sandringham, and who is a very decent dog for a smooth-haired terrier. My hair is wiry and very rough. The funny thing is I found Daisy miserable and worried too. As a matter of fact she was rather bad-tempered and growled when she saw me, but I soon settled that, for I don't stand any nonsense. She said she had dreamed all night long, horrid nightmary dreams about drowned puppies,

that when she woke she thought she saw the moon crying, and began to howl. "It was just a boy with a stable lantern," I laughed. "It may have been," she replied, "but it's the same dream I dreamt and the same moon I saw two days before that day when the poor old gentleman died as he was watching the guns." "You're an old woman," said I, "your liver is out of order. Go and chew some grass."

I did have a grand time that Sunday afternoon at Sandringham. Master and I went everywhere about the grounds. He seemed to want to see everything, all the new things that had been planted, all the new arrangements that were being planned. He was in such good spirits, too, that I forgot myself and scratched up a big stone in one of the walks right in front of the gardener's nose. I ran

to and fro over the flower beds too, and pretended to smell a rat, and dug a great hole in a newly sown grass plot and scattered the mould all over the path.

And Master just laughed and said, "You're a nice scamp to upset everything just as I was having it tidied up for Her to see." He was in great spirits that afternoon was Master; he talked and joked with everybody, and made the Agent laugh so once that I fairly danced with delight. Master's got the most catchable laugh in the world,

but somehow lately he has seemed too tired to laugh much. I nearly went mad with joy when I heard him, and I caught hold of Daisy's ear and chased her round and round till we both dropped dead beat at his feet. "It's time to go home," thought I, "this weather is treacherous. I've got a touch of rheumatism in my off hind leg, and it's beginning to tweak. That's a danger signal."

"Come along, Master," I said, "it's damp under foot and there's a horrid mist rising, and I want to sit and toast in front of the

fire. I want to sit just by your feet and stare at the flames and see all sorts of exciting things in the fire till my head sways and nods and nods and I almost tumble, and then wake up to stare at the flames and watch the battles in the coal again."

And so while Master was looking at one of the new roads they are cutting I turned towards home and began to walk away in the hope that he'd follow me almost without knowing. As he didn't move, I went back and just rubbed my nose gently against his trousers. I love

those rough things he wears at Sandringham—they don't show my hairs as his uniforms and black suits do.

I know he understood, for he gave me a little push with his foot—just fancy if anyone but Master dared to touch me with his foot!—and said something about a lazy young rascal, but instead of coming home he turned to the Agent, and said, "Show me *everything*. I want to see everything, and arrange everything for the year, so that She may find everything ready when She comes down."

That evening after dinner Master did rest for a few minutes. I was so comfy, curled up just behind his knees on the sofa. And then if someone didn't bring him a pile of papers, and he worked and worked and worked while I nodded in front of the fire. If only I could have helped him a little. I got up once and put my paws on his knees, and tried to see what he was doing, but

he laughed a little sadly as he said, "Affairs of State, Cæsar —rather above the head of a little dog." I gave his hand a tiny lick to show I understood, but as I watched the lines on Master's face I thought to myself, "And very bad for the head of dear Master too." But as I've heard them say so many times lately, "That's what comes of being a King."

I couldn't sleep that night. My bed was all knobs and creases. I trampled it down, round and round, but I couldn't get it really as I like it. I

always sleep in Master's bedroom, and I pity anyone who dares to disturb him in the night. It may have been the supper I had— I always eat too much when I'm in the country —or it may have been the talk I had with Daisy. Anyway, just as I was getting off to sleep in the early morning, I started up, and every hair on my back stood on end, for in the corner of the room I saw a strange dark shadow. I bared my teeth and growled as fiercely as I could. "Lie still, Cæsar," said the voice from the bed, "I've got a bit of a cough, old man, and

that's what's disturbed you." But Master didn't see what I saw, and I stopped awake all night long ready to spring at that dark shadow. But it never moved. It seemed to be waiting and watching, watching Master as he tossed uneasily on his bed. And I waited and watched the shadow.

I snuggled close inside Master's thick coat next morning in the train. I was beautifully warm, but I could feel he was shivering, while his hand on my head felt hot. And every time I began to doze I was shaken awake by his cough. "Sorry, Cæsar," he'd say, "you'd better go to sleep by yourself on that seat opposite." I pretended I was not a bit tired and snuggled all the closer to see if I couldn't keep Master warm. He seemed

so cold. "You'd better see a Vet when you get home," thought I. "I don't like that cough. I had a cough, too, once, and I felt as if I had been beaten all over. I remember the Vet said they must keep me in what he called an even temperature. I don't know what that is, but for me, at any rate, it meant lots of cosetting, a gorgeous fire, a special blanket tucked round me, and the daintiest food—such a time in fact that I kept up that cough for weeks and even now when I'm not satisfied with my meals I can bring it on again if I try very hard."

I believe Master wanted an even temperature, but instead of that as soon as we got to London, I saw him changing to go out again somewhere into the wet and cold. I suppose he had to. It was one of those terrible things he calls "a long standing engagement." I'm glad I have no long-standing engagements, and can curl myself up and go to sleep just when I want to. I'm glad I am only the King's little dog. Oh! I'm so glad I'm not a King.

Where *is* Master. He must have gone for a long journey all alone by himself, for I've been all over the Palace and everyone else seems here. But then that's impossible, for he never went anywhere without his little dog. I remember some of my friends have told me how miserable they are when they see boxes and portmanteaux. It means they are to be left behind in the care of someone who half starves them, and only takes them out for ten minutes a day on a string. But I just yelp for pure joy

when I see signs of packing up, for that means a trip with Master to Brighton, Paris, Biarritz, Marienbad, I don't care where. All that I care about is that it means a rest for Master and more of Master, so much more, for his little dog.

They are bringing boxes into the Palace, and there is bustle and movement everywhere. But I can't make it out. I smelt one of the packages, and there were flowers inside. It was a sickly, dead smell.

By the way, I haven't smelt

Master's cigar for days. How's that, I wonder? The last time I smelt that cigar—you can trust Master's little dog to know that scent among a million—was on that Friday afternoon when the man in the long black coat wanted to keep me out of Master's room.

I tried to push past him through the door, but he told someone to hold me back. I snarled.

"That's the King's physician," I heard them say. "And I'm the King's dog," I said, and I

barked and snapped at the people at the door. I knew Master wanted me.

"Let Cæsar come in at once," I heard him say, and they stood back and let me through. I made one of them skip as I passed, I can tell you. I was in a bit of a temper for I'm not used to being kept waiting.

Master was sitting up in a chair. There were three or four black-coated men around him, and the room smelt so funny. She was there, standing beside the chair. I saw he had his

boots on, and I thought at first he was waiting for me to go for a walk with him, for he hadn't been outside the Palace since the day we came back from Sandringham. I jumped round the room and barked for joy. "Hush, little man," said She, "Master's not at all well."

"I'm all right," I heard his voice reply, only it seemed to me so hollow and far away. "Let him be. Here, Cæsar. Do you want to go out, out, out?" Didn't I just? But I looked at Her, at them all, and I saw they wanted to keep Master quiet and get

him to rest, so I yawned and flopped down beside his chair as if I were too stiff to stir.

He had a dreadful fit of coughing, and then when it was over he bent over and patted my head and said, "I'm a bit tired to-day myself, old man. I suppose we'll have to do as we're told, you and I, and keep quiet and warm indoors. But it's no good talking. I've a long-standing engagement for this evening that I must keep. . . . . Well, well, give me a cigar, I'll promise to rest for a bit. No, no, Cæsar can stay, of course."

I watched at Master's feet for—well, it seemed hours, but I almost held my breath for fear of disturbing him, and it may have been only minutes. And then some one carried me out and called me a poor little dog. I was too sleepy to mind. And I haven't seen Master since.

Master's dead. Oh, yes, I know what that means. I know so well that I wish, I wish so much, that I could die too. Some stupid person came and told me a long story about Master having gone away, but I just yawned in his face. Master *doesn't* go away without his little dog. If he did, I'd follow him, and I'd find him. I know he's still here in the Palace, although they won't let me see him, and

yet I feel it's not Master who is here, it's only a little part of *my* Master who is here.

Master, my real Master, has gone somewhere where I can't follow. There's a great big river between Master and me, a river I can't swim; a great big wall, a wall I can't climb. I think he must want me a little bit, and oh! I want him so badly. Where *is* Master?

She has told me. Master's dead. I shall never see him or feel him again. And She is sorrowing for Master too, just the same, only more—so much more because she is a Human, and Humans have bigger hearts to break than poor little dogs. I've only a tiny heart, but it was full of love for dear Master. And dear Master is dead. I've no Master now. I've nothing, no one, to live for. Master is dead.

I'm so miserable. I can't rest. I've just been wandering about the stables. On the way I met one of those foreign dogs they keep there. Thought I to myself, a fight, especially a fight with a foreigner, just fits in with my temper — I've been a tremendous fighter in my time. So I began to dance towards the creature very slowly, on the tips of my toes, with my legs and my tail very straight and stiff, and my hair on end, and drawing my breath in very loudly. It's the correct thing in a square fight to give the

enemy time to get ready. And then somehow, I couldn't go on. For I remembered Master and the way he talked to me at Biarritz when I started to tackle a French poodle, an over-dressed thing all tied up with ribbons.

"What a typical Englishman you are, Cæsar," said Master, "you can't meet a foreigner without beginning to growl, and strut about as if the whole world had been created just for you. Now, look here, I'm tired of all this snarling and fighting, and you've just got to make friends

instead of going about everywhere quarrelling with every dog whose looks you don't approve of."

And Master actually made me walk quietly beside him along the Plage, while he called to the Frenchman to come and walk with him on the other side. Then after I'd got used to the chap he left us alone together, and really he wasn't at all a bad kind of a dog and he certainly knew how to make himself very pleasant. To my surprise, too, I discovered he was very sensible in spite of his

airs. He actually knew quite a lot of things I didn't, though of course I didn't give myself away, and I got one or two useful tips from him. I was really sorry to say good-bye to him in the end.

And Master did just the same with that Russian he keeps at Sandringham, and with those long sausage-shaped things with short legs they call hounds in Germany. Of course I could fight and beat the whole lot of them if I tried, but I'm beginning to see it's rather a silly game to make enemies when

you can just as easily make friends.

And so when I came up to the foreigner in the stable yard I wagged my tail, and we rubbed noses and went in together to see Master's charger, Kildare. I found the foreign chap was nearly as sorry about Master as I was. It wasn't the same sorrow, you know, but it was very real.

They were dressing up Kildare in her best, and giving her an extra-special rub down. Master's starting on his last journey to-day, they say, and Kildare goes with him.

If only I might go with him too. Little dogs never march in a procession, they tell me. But then, no little dog ever loved his Master as I do, and no Master was like my Master.

She says I can go if I am very good and follow close behind Master, and walk very slowly, and never move from the middle of the road. Oh, how glad and thankful I am. I wonder if Master knows, and is pleased that, after all, his little dog is going with him on his last journey.

I'm so frightened. I've never been afraid before in my life. I've seen crowds before, huge crowds, but never a crowd like this. They always used to shout and wave their hats. But these people are silent as,—why, silent as Death.

I recognise lots of people who are waiting outside the Church. There's the King who went shooting with Master lately,

and there's the other King who talked so solemnly with him over in Germany. And there's the man they call the Prime Minister. He doesn't know me, but I shan't forget in a hurry the day he came to Brighton. When he left I watched him from the window, walking on the front. It was then that Master said to me, "If you could talk, Cæsar, you could tell some surprising things, couldn't you?" I should think I could, but Master knew I wouldn't if I could. He always trusted me with all his secrets.

No one takes any notice of Master's little dog. I'm so lonely beside this man in kilts. Kilts make me think of the moors, and the times we had together in Scotland. Master looked so splendid in kilts, and he was always so happy when he wore them.

I think I shall just put my tail tight between my legs and try and creep away somewhere, away from all these people and these uniforms.

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How good and kind She is. She has just been and patted me, and told me to be a brave dog, and hold myself up straight, for I'm the King's dog.

Do you know, I had almost forgotten. I belong to the King. I mustn't let Master, my King, be ashamed of his little dog to-day. How beautifully Kildare is marching. He's so proud to be here. And I'm proud too but oh, so very, very sad, for this is my last journey with Master.

I'm marching in front of the Kings. I've no history, I've no

pedigree, I'm not high-born. But I loved him, and I was faithful to him, and he didn't care how lowly or humble man or beast might be as long as they did their best and were faithful.

We've come to the end of the journey. They say I can't follow Master any further. They say there are no little dogs where Master has gone.

But I know better.

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